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POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

Sept./Oct.—1980

Published By Rockland County A.O.H., P.O. Box 16, Garnerville, N.Y. 10923
In cooperation with the Emerald Society, Fire Department, N.Y.C.

SPECIAL THANKS TO DIVISION 9, SUFFOLK CO., N.Y. A.O.H., AND THE NORTH JERSEY AMERICAN-IRISH LEAGUE. THE PEC ACKNOWLEDGES THEIR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE PUBLICATION OF THIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER.

H-BLOCK AND ARMAGH WOMENS PRISON BLANKET PROTESTORS PREPARING HUNGER STRIKE TO THE END. See Action Letter for details.

NEWS BITS

JOHN J FINUCANE

3 year old child killed by a British saracen in West Belfast...RUC landrover deliberately ran down and seriously injured 35 year old father of 4, Edward McKee, during a protest (Irish People 7/19)...Miriam Daly, mother, lecturer at Queens University, Belfast, smash H-Block activist, murdered by pro-British para-militaries. It is feared that pro-British forces are waging another murder campaign against Catholics (Irish People 7/5)...RUC members shot dead at point blank range a suspected member of the IRA who was *unarmed and wounded* (Republican News 7/19).

"Why don't you join the British Army when you leave school an go and shoot some Paddies in Northern Ireland". Those were the words of a British Army recruiting officer at an army recruitment display in a school in Britain (Britain's Irish Post 6/28)...Britain should declare its wish to leave Northern Ireland and should start preparing the mechanisms which would allow withdrawal without social or economic destruction - Justin Keating, leader of the Irish Labour Party in the Senate (Irish Post 6/28).

The recent ruthless murders of prominent Irish leaders *against British rule* in Northern Ireland John Turnly and Miriam Daly may have been the work of the British Special Air Service (SAS) (Ireland's Hibernia 7/3)...British government outraged at America's ABC-TV over its presentation "To Die For Ireland". Many Americans cancel vacations in Northern Ireland. British government outraged because program presented the Provisional IRA as the defender of the nationalists (Hibernia 7/3). It is a known fact that the British Occupation Forces concentrate on *attacking not protecting* nationalists...A delegation from the International Committee Against Repression, in Northern Ireland investigating conditions in H-Block have been refused entry, and have said they will launch a campaign throughout the major cities of Europe to mobilise support for the Republican prisoners on the *blanket protest* (The Advocate 7/12)...Thousands of Irish-Americans demonstrate at White House in protest against Britain's H-Block attracts wide news media coverage in Washington, DC (Irish People 7/5)

Referring to Prime Minister Thatcher's one-sided solution to the Irish Question "one would give total control to the Protestants, the other a limited voice to Catholics"...What is absolutely crucial for peace in Ireland is a declaration of the Thatcher government's intention to work toward a United Ireland (NY Daily News 7/7)...British to send Irish Regiment to Northern Ireland (Irish Echo 7/12)...Fr. Denis Faul, Northern Ireland's most prominent and highly respected human rights activist and chaplain at British prisons detained and harassed by British UDR at border crossing. Fr. Faul noted that only Catholics were harassed (Belfast Irish Weekly 7/19)...British authorities have banned Fr. Denis Faul from Long Kesh (Republican News 7/19).

Communications Workers of America, at their recent convention, call for the United States Government to make a genuine effort to bring about a peaceful resolution to the troubles in Ireland (CWA 7/80). Police were investigating the possibility that Protestant extremists started a fire in a crowded resort hotel in Bundoran, Ireland that killed 17 people (Irish People 8/30)...19 year old Jim McCarron and 23 year old Michael Donnelly shot dead by British soldiers (Irish People 8/23)...23year old father of 3, James Bell shot dead by British army gunman (Irish People 8/30)...Pro-British loyalist gunman murder 22yr old Rodney McCormack as his wife looks on in horror (Irish Echo 8/30)...Pro-British loyalist assassins murder 87 year old Bill Younger and his 50 yr old daughter Letitia. There crime! They were Protestants who got along very well with their Catholic neighbors. WHY WERE THESE MURDERS NOT REPORTED BY THE AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA?

Martin Meehan ends hunger strike after 66 days at the intervention of Cardinal Tomas O'Fiaich and offer by Amnesty International to investigate his case. Meehan is serving a 12 year sentence for kidnapping a charge of which he stated he is innocent (Irish Echo 8/2).

IRISH-AMERICAN POLITICAL WEAKNESS

PEG MATONE

The absence of a powerful Irish-American voting bloc remains the most perplexing phenomenon in American politics. True, an imposing roster of senators, congressmen, governors, state legislators and chairmen, and even presidential candidates, boast of Irish ancestry.

However, just how effective has this impressive group been in influencing a just solution to the current Northern Ireland situation, which has existed since 1968? What have they actually done to end the violence which has claimed 2,000 lives, maimed thousands, and destroyed property worth millions of dollars?

Is this a US concern? It certainly is — or should be. American foreign aid, both financial and material, continues to go forth to England despite United States policy banning assistance to nations guilty of violations of human rights. Investigations by the European Court of Human Rights and Amnesty International have declared England guilty of oppressive acts. Our government should be as concerned for the oppressed victims in Northern Ireland as those in Russia, South Africa, and other parts of the world. Yet it does not. Why haven't they shown the same outrage at atrocities committed in the "H -Blocks" of Long Kesh and the Armagh Women's Prison by our English *allies*?

True, some progress is being made. Over 130 congressmen and US Senators have joined Mario Biaggi's Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs. Why has their attempt to hold impartial hearings been blocked by the Speaker of the House (himself an Irish American)? *Who controls America?*

Public pressure has not been sufficiently exerted to force such hearings. The failure of many Irish groups to form one strong organization renders them politically ineffective. Diverse views on other social issues and the lack of education committees splinter them into small powerless bodies. The old adage, "Too many chiefs and not enough Indians," certainly applies here. What can be done? What must be done?

First, recognize that there is a serious human rights crisis in Northern Ireland. We can no longer disregard the fact that our British *friends* are guilty of the same violations against minorities as are Asiatic, African, and Latin-American oppressors. Reports by the European Court of Human Rights, Amnesty International, and even British judges, confirm that torture and repression have been, and continue to be, used in British prisons in Northern Ireland.

Second, realize that true strength lies in unity of action. Irish-American groups should have one cohesive organization with objectives to be attained and procedures for attaining them.

Third, settle for no less than positive action from elected officials. No more well-written but non-productive resolutions whose only value is as office decorations. Recognize political expediency for what it is. Courting ethnic groups in election years, (parading on St. Patrick's Day), (inviting prominent Irishmen to White House luncheons, etc.) are old ploys, serving no constructive purpose. Campaign promises are usually forgotten the day after election.

The answer? Read, study, organize, write, and demand that our government investigate and work to end British terrorism practiced in Long Kesh, and evolve a solution to the tragedy of Northern Ireland, justly, peacefully, and quickly.

BY THE WAY

DOROTHY ALLEN

The persistence and dedication of the Irish-American is paying off. Early this year there were numerous demonstrations directed against the British Army's Black Watch Brigade Pipe Band as they performed around the U.S. The new president of Marist College, NY where one such demonstration took place, promised that no more anti-Irish programs will be presented on that campus. Congratulations to the good brothers and sisters that participated...Rumor has it that British occupation forces in Northern Ireland are sporting a new "T" shirt. "Get rid of pollution; kill a Catholic a day"...A member of the PEC is presently touring many large European cities on behalf of the H-Block protestors...NBC-TV NEWS carried a story about a young man charged with the murder of a young lady. NBC made it very clear that the alleged murderer was *first generation Irish*.

IRISH GOVERNMENT POLICY ON NORTHERN IRELAND

PETER T KING

The author is a councilman, Town of Hempstead, N.Y.

This past February I had the opportunity to visit the Republic of Ireland and meet with a number of political and governmental officials, including a representative of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs. At that time the newly elected Prime Minister, Charles Haughey, had not yet issued a policy statement on Northern Ireland and the briefing which I received represented, in effect, the policy of the Lynch government toward Ulster. Quite frankly, the Lynch policy was no policy at all.

The basic position of the Dublin government, as it was enunciated to me at that time, was that it was hopeful that the talks being conducted between England and several of the major political parties in Northern Ireland would lead to the establishment in Ulster of a workable power-sharing formula satisfactory to the Protestant majority and the Catholic minority and that, in turn, this would set in motion a dialogue between Ulster and the Republic which would lead to the re-unification of all 32 counties.

The inherent *weakness* of this position of the Irish government is that it relies almost entirely upon the good intentions of Britain. The history of Ulster, of course, *hardly justifies such a reliance*. Indeed, the Foreign Affairs Department admitted to me that even if the present talks were successful, reunification could not be expected for another 30 - 40 years! It is clear that if ever there is to be a just and equitable solution to the nightmare in Northern Ireland, there must be additional factors inserted into the equation. Specifically, the Republic must forcefully declare itself in favor of the re-unification and the United States should use its diplomatic leverage to move the parties toward the reunification of all Ireland. [Ed. Note: *Pressure must be brought to bear on England to declare its intent to withdraw and to support the right of all the people of all Ireland to self-determination.*]

Significantly, the recent pronouncements and actions of Prime Minister Haughey *appear* to constitute a definite re-direction away from the Lynch policy. He has not only called for the re-unification of Ireland, but has requested the diplomatic assistance of other countries in that regard including the United States. It is, of course, too early to tell how determined Mr. Haughey really is about re-unification. It is hoped, however, that soon Irish-American organizations and the Dublin government will have an opportunity to speak as one voice. It is therefore imperative that Irish-Americans increase their pressure upon our State Department to take Mr. Haughey up on his offer and inject American diplomacy into the Northern Ireland situation. If we succeed in having the United States assert its power of moral persuasion on behalf of a united Ireland, we will have taken a significant step toward making Ireland *a nation once again*.

BUT I'M AGAINST THE VIOLENCE

JAMES F. CLARKE

How many times when discussing Northern Ireland we will notice a misinformed person retreat as the facts emerge and declare "But, I'm against the violence".

The person does not want to exhibit his ignorance so he clutches at the obvious - the violence. When asked about the violence, the usual response is in terms of the IRA.

When we confront an individual described above, we can see the success of *British propaganda*. Obviously, British propaganda is successful due to the acquiescence of the media in the United States.

One then describes the historic English tactic of *divide and conquer*, the gerrymandering of Ireland, British government pogroms against Catholics in Northern Ireland between 1920 and 1922 when 500 Catholics were murdered, dividing of Protestants and Catholics after food marches in the early 1930's, RUC and B Specials attacking the Civil Rights demonstrators during 1969 and 1970, open backing of the UDA and retaining of the B Specials, (now the UDR) British army forays against Catholics during 1970 resulting in Bloody Sunday in 1971. Internment without trial in 1971, special legislation, such as the Emergency Provisions Act, Criminalization policy of 1976 where every Catholic detained is a criminal, SAS in 1976, and finally, Long Kesh and Armagh Womens's Prison in 1980 where 450 young men and women are again repeating history - defying the British Government from the H-Blocks in the tradition of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, Thomas J. Clarke, and Terence McSweeney.

After the above litany is recited, the individual is usually stunned but can understand two facts. First, a supposed democratic government, Britain, actively pursues a policy of institutionalized terrorism and second, he or she can understand why Irish-Americans are concerned about Northern Ireland and are united to rectify history. [Ed. Note: *Irish-Americans should ask themselves two questions. First, what right does Britain have to be in Ireland and secondly, for what reason did their ancestors come to America?*]

URGENT

URGENT

URGENT

URGENT

ACTION LETTER

KEN CLINTON

The PEC-Emerald Society, FDNY has been informed that, in all probability, within the next 3 months the 430 young Irish men and women on the *blanket protest* in Britain's infamous H-Blocks in Long Kesh Prison and Armagh Womens Prison in Northern Ireland will begin a hunger strike *to the end*. They are protesting for political status and an end to the inhuman conditions daily inflicted upon them by the British forces of occupation. They have been sent to prison because of *special laws, special interrogation centers and special courts*.

Both Amnesty International and Britain's own Bennett Commission concluded: 1) that as many as 93 % of these protestors were tried by Britain's one-judge, non-jury Diplock Courts; 2) that 80 % of these cases resulted in conviction on statements made under duress; 3) that the accused were denied due process.

The PEC has already contacted President Carter, candidates Ronald Reagan and John Andreson, Senators Edward Kennedy and Daniel Moynihan, Congressman Thomas O'Neill and NYS Governor Hugh Carey requesting that they intercede with the powers that be to prevent this unnecessary suffering and waste of life and the disaster that will follow - *a general uprising and open bloody warfare*. (A subsequent press release was sent by the PEC to the wire services and approximately 200 newspapers, TV and radio stations throughout the United States.)

We urge you to please respond to this action letter request. It is most important that you write to at least President Carter and Ronald Reagan. Below is a sample letter that you may use as a guide or simply *rewrite* as your letter on your own stationery. Please reproduce this action letter for distribution to your friends, family, relatives, etc.

Honorable James Carter
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Ronald Reagan
9841 Airport Boulevard
Suite 1430
Los Angeles, Calif 90045

address _____

Dear

date _____

I have just been informed that within the next 3 months it is very likely that the 430 young men and women on the "blanket protest" in the H Blocks of Long Kesh Prison and Armagh Womens Prison in Northern Ireland will begin a hunger strike "to the end". They are protesting for political status and an end to the inhuman conditions which are daily inflicted upon them by the British forces.

I wish to remind you: 1) that both Amnesty International and Britain's own Bennett Commission concluded that 93 % of the protestors were tried by Britain's special one-judge, non-jury Diplock Courts; 2) that 80 % of these cases resulted in conviction on statements made under duress; and 3) that the accused were denied due process.

I appeal to you to intercede with the powers that be to prevent this unnecessary suffering and waste of life and the disaster that will follow - *a general uprising and open bloody warfare*.

Sincerely,
signature

If you wish to write further, please write to the following:

Senator Edward Kennedy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Daniel Moynihan
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Governor Hugh Carey
Executive Chamber
Albany, N.Y. 12233

Congressman Thomas O'Neill
Speaker of the House
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

PLEASE DO YOUR SHARE

IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY RECEIVE THE PEC NEWSLETTER BY MAIL AND WISH TO HAVE IT SENT TO YOUR HOME (FREE), PLEASE FORWARD YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS TO THE POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE, P.O. BOX 16, GARNERVILLE, N.Y. 10923.